



HEALTHY BOYHOOD

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ARTHUR TREWBY

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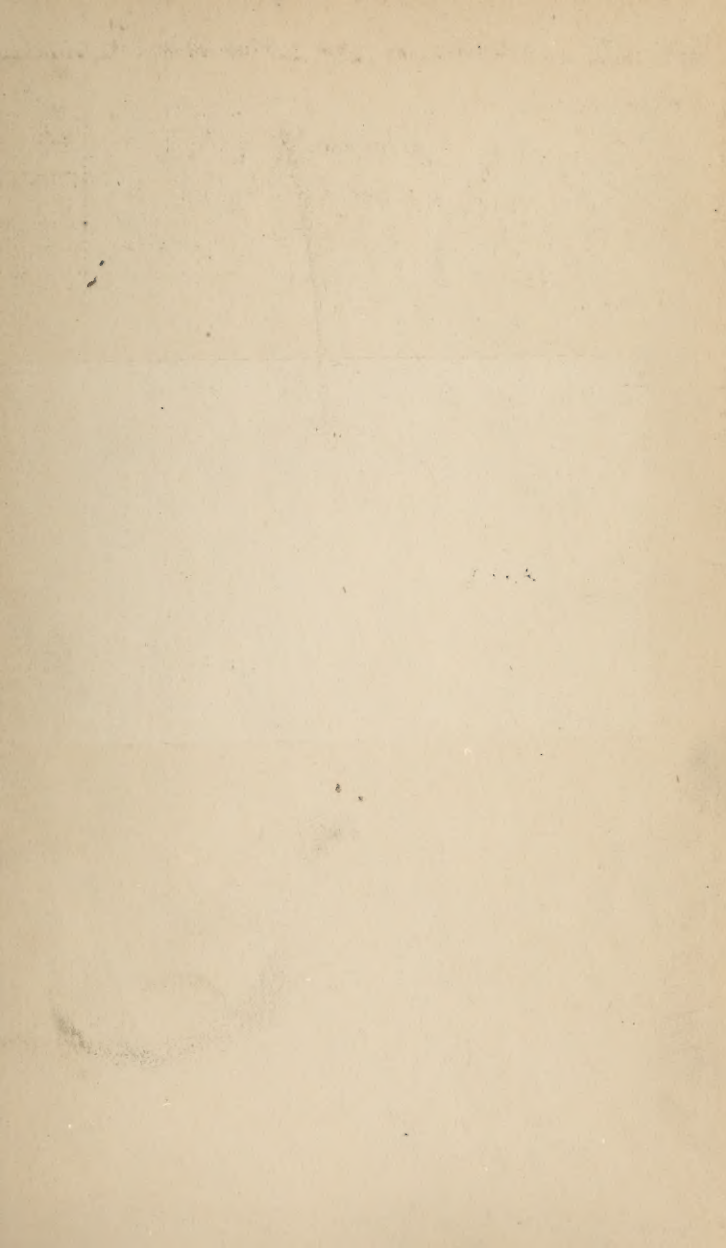
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And by the way, ye tender mothers and sober fathers of Christian families, a prodigious thing that theory of life as orally learned at a great public school. Why, if you could hear the boys of fourteen who blush before mothers and sneak off in silence in the presence of their daughters, talking among each other—it would be the woman's turn to blush then. Before he was twelve years old little Pen had heard talk enough to make him quite awfully wise upon certain points—and so, Madam, has your pretty little rosy-cheeked son, who is coming home from school for the ensuing holidays. I don't say the boy is lost, or that the innocence has left him which he had from "Heaven which is our home," but that the shades of the prison-house are closing very fast over him, and that we are helping as much as possible to corrupt him.

—W. M. THACKERAY.

The diseases of society can, no more than corporal maladies, be prevented or cured without being spoken about in plain language.—J. S. MILL.

INTRODUCTION

For parents, schoolmasters, etc.

THE above two quotations will indicate the evil dealt with in the following pages and the remedy suggested. In this introduction, *which has been so bound in that it can be taken out, if desired, without affecting the rest of the book*, I propose to explain briefly why it has been thought necessary to write on the subject at all. As ignorance of the nature and extent of the evil is so widespread, it will, perhaps, be advisable to say something about these points first.

The evil may consist either in impurity of thought or impurity of action, of the kind practised in solitude or in company. It is with the solitary vice that most danger is to be apprehended, as its attacks are more insidious, and in almost all cases it will not be discovered until the mischief has been done, if then. As this too leads to the other kind, methods for eradicating it will *ipso facto* prevent that also.

The question of prevalence is of primary importance; for if only a small percentage were affected by it, the plea of urgency loses much of its force. It can be shown, however, that not only has this vice existed from time immemorial, but that, owing to the developments of civilization, there is an increasing tendency for it to grow more pronounced. I can, however, in this place but briefly state the opinions of one or two authorities concerning it, and direct attention to where fuller information may be obtained.

The whole question was discussed by the Rev. the Hon. E. Lyttelton, the present Headmaster of Eton, in 1883,* who, among others, cites Sir Andrew Clark, Sir W. Jenner, and a University doctor, the two latter placing the percentage of boys affected by it at from sixty to eighty per cent. Dr. Clement Dukes, physician to Rugby School, places it at ninety to ninety-five per cent. of all boys at boarding schools,† and additional evidence, based on statistics, may be obtained by consulting Prof. Stanley Hall's monumental work on adolescence.‡ Further, if some of this evidence be objected to as apply-

* "The Causes and Prevention of Immorality in Schools," pp. 8-12.

† "The Preservation of Health, etc.," pp. 149-150.

‡ "Adolescence," vol. I., pp. 432-435.

ing to the condition of things twenty years ago, it will be sufficient to state that a circular addressed to the headmasters of most of the public schools, by the Moral Education Committee last year, asking for their opinion on this very subject, produced replies which showed that they at least were fully alive to the gravity of the matter. I may remark, in parenthesis, that most headmasters would underrate and not overrate the extent of the evil, owing to their being unable, from their position, to form a just estimate, which would, in most cases, be biased from their desire to take the most favorable view of the condition of their own school.

There is no dispute as to the main cause of the state of things indicated above. It would be easy to give numerous quotations showing that the great cause of it all is the fatuous way in which young boys are brought up without any clear idea of the functions of their bodies and of the serious consequences of misusing those functions. Two quotations only must suffice. "I have noticed that all patients who have confessed to me that they have practiced this vice, have lamented that they were not, when children, made aware of its consequences, and I have been pressed over and over again to urge on parents, guardians, schoolmasters, and others interested in the education of youth, the necessity of giving their charge some warning, some intimation of their danger."* Again: "The most distressing cases and the most deep-seated mischief that I have ever come across are those in which the vicious habit has been begun, not in boyhood, but in childhood and excepting

* "The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs," by William Acton, p. 9 of the 3rd edition; three more editions have been published.

in one very abnormal instance, *the reason has been nothing but blind, helpless ignorance.*"* The italics are my own.

"Every schoolboy—even the youngest—may be taught to meet all his temptations with a manly courage if he be shown what they are. Whereas, he is turned adrift into this new world, warned of all temptations but one, and this the one which meets him most insidiously, usually under cover of the dark, and when no eye or hand is near to help him to withstand it."

"What can a boy think of this silence, but that his parents, masters and schoolfellows wink at the matter? Silence in such a matter is connivance. It is an indubitable fact that the vice is one which meets with too little discouragement on all hands, and is therefore practiced with too little shame."†

But some may urge: "If a boy could be kept innocent of these things until he was, say, fifteen or sixteen years old, it would be better not to say anything until then." It would, perhaps, be advantageous if it could be done; but the point is that in few cases can it be done; for if a boy learns nothing from his companions or from observation, he is very liable to fall into bad habits from accident, as has been proved in numerous cases. Those who would excuse themselves from giving this instruction until the boy is fifteen or sixteen, are probably those who will do nothing at all when that time comes, except perhaps refer to the subject in so general and vague a way that the boy will not understand the meaning of what is said; or, if he does, it will produce no influence

* "Training of the Young in Laws of Sex," by the Rev. the Hon. E. Lyttelton, p. 88.

† "The Preservation of Health, etc.," p. 149.

on his conduct. A difficulty shirked when a boy is nine or ten is not made easier when he is five years older.

It cannot too strongly be urged that this is no question between innocence and knowledge, but between obtaining false or true ideas of the facts of life. It is a question as to whether you would rather have your children pick up a distorted idea of the subject from their companions or from other sources, than teach them yourself. Curiosity will be aroused at some period, often at the kindergarten, either from pictures, observation, or from biblical stories, and the fables of heathen mythology; and if once this thirst for knowledge be not satisfied from pure sources, the child will turn to the impure and muddy sources which are all that he can obtain.

When it is considered that probably not ten per cent. of parents and schoolmasters ever warn their boys of the temptations they will meet with, and explain to them the reasons for these temptations and how they are to be overcome, it cannot be wondered at that so many have succumbed; the pity of it is that when such good results have been achieved by judicious instruction so few have benefited thereby. What can be done is shown in the following extract from a speech by the Rev. R. A. Bull (headmaster of a preparatory school), at a conference held at Canterbury in March, 1905, under the presidency of the Archbishop, to consider this question: "The boys themselves are never in any doubt about the value of this teaching; and I can assure those who hesitate in speaking out, that after fifteen years' experience I have not, in one single case, had reason to regret any plainness of speech. I have been assured over and over again by boys that this has made all the

difference to them and saved them from falling as so many others have done." Surely, when such testimony is given spontaneously by the boys themselves of the value of knowledge, the indifference and ignorance of parents and schoolmasters in withholding it from them appears most culpable. The following quotation from the same speech brings this out yet more forcibly: "I wonder how many present to-day know the answers to correspondents in *The Boys' Own Paper*. For the last twenty years or more I have taken it in, and during that time scarcely a single month has passed without several answers to anonymous correspondence asking for advice as to how to escape from 'bad habits,' or to overcome this trouble during the night. . . . Now what does this simple fact mean? It means that there are hundreds of our boys in all classes of life wanting advice on a subject intimately affecting their health, physical and moral—touching their very life and that of their future children—and they have no friend to turn to, no one who has made it clear to them that he has sympathy for boys' frailties, and so they must write anonymously and to a newspaper!"

Such in outline is the argument for plain speaking on this subject. It has been shown that the percentage of boys who fall into bad habits at some period of their lives is very high, and that the cause of most of it is ignorance. It has been shown also that knowledge properly given cannot do harm, but in the majority of cases will do inestimable good. Finally, we have the spectacle of boys being compelled to write to a magazine in order to obtain that help and sympathy which should have been given them by their parents and schoolmasters. If the facts were fully realized, I feel con-

vinced that the remedy would quickly be forthcoming, were it not for the supposed difficulty which most parents and schoolmasters imagine to exist in giving this instruction.

It is with the object of obviating this difficulty that this book has been written; for what can be easier than to give this, or any other book on the subject, to a boy with an injunction to read it carefully and come for any further advice or information he may wish. The ice being thus broken it will be easy to approach the subject again at any future time, and thus keep in touch with the boy's development. The book has been so arranged that Chapter I. contains probably all that is needful for a young boy; or the instructor may prefer to give a general warning in his own language, and later on—*i.e.*, about the age of fourteen—the book can be given in its entirety. The procedure must, of course, be suited to each individual boy, as the needs of the case or the discretion of the instructor may suggest.

While all has been said in this book that can, I believe, with advantage, be said on the subject, one omission may strike many people, and that is that no appeal has been made to religious influences. I think, however, that the influence of religion can most advantageously be used about the age of sixteen; as it is then that the stress of temptation is greatest, and that it would be a mistake to introduce it before that time. Many boys are confirmed at this time; and their preparation is used by some headmasters to warn them of impurity. In most cases this is too late; the warning should have been given earlier, and accompanied with reasons and facts which a boy should know, otherwise it will be of little use; but the appeal to religion comes

just at the right time; it is, as it were, a force held in reserve to be brought up at the critical moment to complete the victory or lessen the defeat.

The names of the writers from whom I have quoted have all been given with the exception of Dr. Stall, whose excellent book, "What a Young Boy Ought to Know," has been of great assistance to me in preparing pages 25-26, some of his phrases being so good that it was impossible to better them.

Limits of space have made it difficult to bring out fully the strength of the argument for plain speaking in this introduction; so that I will now leave the book to be of what use it may, knowing that the time spent upon it, which has been out of all proportion to its pretensions and size, will not have been wasted if but a few are benefited thereby.

FENTON HOUSE,
HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

A. TREWBY.

HEALTHY BOYHOOD

HEALTHY BOYHOOD

BY

ARTHUR TREWBY, M.A.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION

BY

SIR DYCE DUCKWORTH, M.D., LL.D.

Consulting Physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital;
Senior Physician to the Seamen's Hospital, Greenwich.

AND A

FOREWORD

BY

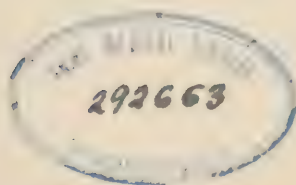
FIELD-MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS,

K.G., K.P., V.C., O.M., P.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,
D.C.L., LL.D.

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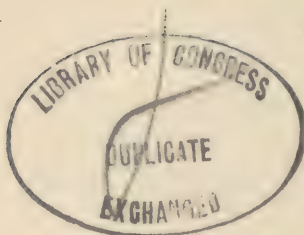
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INTRODUCTION

THE author of this little book has urged me to write a few lines of introduction to it. It hardly appears necessary to add anything to what is so well set forth in the following pages. I suppose, however, that Mr. Trewby regards the expression of a medical opinion in favour of this effort as likely to carry particular weight in a matter which so gravely concerns the wholesome development of body, mind, and character during the critical period of adolescence.

The subject treated of does indeed enlist the attention and serious con-

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sideration of all practising medical men, and there are no differences of opinion respecting it. The evils as laid bare here are put before the *puer ingenuus* ("one of the most lovely things in nature," as the late Mr. Bayard, sometime American Minister in this country, once expressed it), with plainness and delicacy, and without any exaggeration. Such a task is not easy. The subject in all its bearings is painful to realise and dwell upon, yet the necessity for dealing with it boldly and in unmistakable language is imperative in a Christian country, and is sadly often shirked by parents and other guides of youth; most often, as I believe, as a result of that strange inherent delicacy peculiar

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to Englishmen, perhaps best described by the French term *gaucherie*, a form of shyness pertaining not seldom to any outspoken declaration on matters relating to religion or morality. This probably accounts for the fact that so few writers on religion, medicine, or morality have ventured to touch this question of sexual debasement in a form that could best meet the case, and prove a salutary source of enlightenment and warning to those concerned.

The presentment of facts set out in this little book can hardly fail to bring home to the ordinary schoolboy the nature and risks of indulgence in impurity either in thought or deed. I feel sure that it may be honestly commended

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to the attention of all parents and persons placed in charge of young boys. I can only wish for it the success and usefulness it deserves.

DYCE DUCKWORTH, M.D.

15th November, 1906.

FOREWORD

I HAVE been asked to write a short Foreword to this little book, and I do so willingly, for the author has treated the very difficult subject with which he deals with the utmost delicacy, at the same time that he points out, with necessary clearness, the evil that may ensue from absolute ignorance of the temptation that must assail schoolboys, and the terrible results which are sure to follow from giving way to those temptations.

It will be a great satisfaction to me if anything I can add to Mr. Trewby's

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words should help to make parents understand that, for the sake of their sons' well-being, and the nation's strength and prosperity, boys should be plainly told all they will have to fight against when they come to be associated with other boys at school and elsewhere.

All who have experience of schools—both public and private—know how prevalent is the evil described by Mr. Trewby, and their testimony goes far to prove that it is by parents, in the first instance, that this evil can be most effectually dealt with. It is by parents, or those who take the place of parents, that such timely warning can be given as will prevent boys erring, from sheer ignorance of the harm they may do

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themselves, which is usually at the bottom of evil practices.

I know that parents are very diffident about speaking to their sons on this subject, and it is in the hope that they will be greatly helped in the performance of this most necessary duty, if they will put this little book into the hands of their boys and explain carefully to them what they have to guard against, that I am induced to write these few words of introduction.

It will not do to wait until a boy goes to a public school, for much mischief may result from the necessary warning not having been given while he is still a mere child at a private school.

Particular attention should be called

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to that part of the book which tells boys that, at a certain period, the power of handing on the gift of life comes to them. It should be impressed upon them that that gift should be regarded as sacred—given to them by God—and that they must guard it with care, and fight against the temptation to do anything which may impair it.

Above all, boys should be advised to shun bad companionship, and never to listen to low and indecent talk. It should be impressed upon them not only to abstain from evil themselves, but to do all in their power to help others to lead pure and healthy lives.

ROBERTS, F.M.

24th January, 1907.

HEALTHY BOYHOOD

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CHAPTER I.

LIFE has often been compared to a race, but it has, in some respects, a closer resemblance to a game, because if we do not know the rules we are constantly being penalised for breaking them. The penalty does not depend upon chance, but is just the same whether we break the rule knowingly or not.

Suppose, for instance, that you took a dose of poison by mistake instead of

medicine, the fact that you did not know what you were doing would make no difference, you would become very ill just the same. You will, therefore, see how important it is that you should know something about the rules of health, and the penalty for breaking them, so that you may grow up without at any time injuring yourself through ignorance.

Now, in order to explain this fully to you, we must consider the time when you were a baby. You have had, perhaps, some curiosity to know how a baby arrives in the world, and is, as we say, born; and, as you are now old enough to understand something about it, I will explain this point first. I shall

make it clearer to you if I start from plants and then consider other living things.

No doubt you will have noticed that the seeds of a plant become ripe after the flower has withered and dropped ; but the plant must flower before it can produce seeds, because two parts of different flowers must combine together before the seed can be formed. These parts are in the centres of the flowers and are called pollen and ovaries. The pollen is a yellow dust, and is on what may be called the male flower ; and the ovary is on the female flower. The ovary contains the young seeds, which can only form into ripe seeds if some pollen is carried to them ; otherwise

they simply shrivel up. The process by which the pollen combines with the ovary to form ripe seeds is called fertilisation, because it enables the seed to grow and develop into a plant or tree. The pollen may be blown by the wind or carried by insects, when they visit the flowers in search of honey; but its presence is always necessary unless the ovary is to die.

When we come to fishes, we find that they, too, are male and female, and have parts which correspond to the pollen and ovaries; but the process of fertilisation is, of course, rather different from that of plants. More care is taken of the eggs after they have been fertilised; and, strange as it may seem, certain

kinds of fish make nests for the reception of the eggs, by digging a hollow in the bank of the river, or building a nest of seaweed, shells, etc.

In some cases the father fish does all the work of building the nest, and guards the eggs until they are hatched, when he still looks after the young fish, and even leads them back to the nest when they stray too far away.

You will have noticed that in plants the seed remains on the stalk until it is completely ripe, when it falls to the ground, or is wafted away by the wind to find a resting place in some fruitful soil. But with most fish, the seeds, after fertilisation, are left to the action of the sun, and are rocked about by the

waves until the young fish are ready to break forth and begin life by themselves.

With birds, instead of the egg being fertilised after it is laid, it must be fertilised before it is laid, when the shell is not yet formed. If it were laid before the father bird had fertilised it, it could not develop into a chicken, but would become addled. Even when the egg is laid the duty of the hen is, as you know, not finished ; for, if the egg is to develop into a chicken, the hen must sit on it for a certain number of days before the chicken is ready to leave its shell.

With animals a very similar process takes place ; only, instead of the egg being laid and then hatched, that part

corresponding to the little speck within the egg of a hen—which grows into a chicken—never leaves the mother until it has grown large enough and is ready to break through its covering and come forth into the world. But in most cases it is not ready even then to carry on life by itself; for it needs protecting care and special food from the mother for some time to come. Some kinds of animals, such as kangaroos and opossums, have pouches where the mother puts her young directly they are born, because they are too small and helpless to look after themselves.

All that I have said above applies to you and me. As the little speck within the egg of a hen, after fertilisation,

slowly grows by feeding on the stuff surrounding it, until, when the hen has sat upon it for three weeks, it has grown strong enough to break the shell, so, from a tiny speck within the body of your mother you grew until, after about nine months, you were born with much suffering and travail. You will now be able to understand the love your father and mother have for you—for you are part of themselves. Great indeed is the suffering that some mothers have to go through before their little baby can be born. Sometimes a mother lays down her life for his sake ; so that you will see what affection mothers have for their children, and how sacred the relation is between them. It is for this

reason that these things ought not to be talked about, not because they are to be ashamed of, but because they are far too private and sacred to be talked about; so that, if you want to know more about it, you should ask your father or mother to tell you. But what I have told you ought to enable you to understand it all quite well; if there is anything you do not fully understand it is because you are not yet old enough to do so; and you need not trouble yourself about it, for in a few years everything will be quite clear to you. A boy cannot have any affection for his mother or respect for himself, who would dare to talk lightly or jest about these things; they are far too sacred

for that. If, therefore, any boy begins to speak about this subject in a way you would not like your mother to hear, tell him to leave off at once. Your own conscience will tell you when a boy is doing or saying anything wrong, and if you cannot stop him you can avoid him.

CHAPTER II.

IF you are interested in gardening, you will know that a fruit tree will not bear fruit for the first year or two, because it is not strong enough to do so. It may flower but it will not bear fruit. It is the same with all living things; they cannot produce seeds or young ones until after a certain age, and not well-developed ones until fully grown.

The time taken for a young animal to become fully grown varies greatly with different animals, from a few weeks up to over thirty years in the case of the elephant. In this country a man does not

stop growing until he is about twenty-two ; and it is extremely important that nothing should be done to check this growth. While all other parts of the body, such as the heart, lungs, muscles, etc., are growing from babyhood upwards, the parts which are necessary for producing children do not start developing until about the age of fourteen.

This is called the time of puberty. Its commencement is recognised by the break in the voice, and the hair which begins to grow on the face and other parts of the body. The body now begins to form the fluid which corresponds to the pollen in plants ; and this is, therefore, called the seminal fluid. Those parts of the body which produce it are

called the organs of generation. Is it not a wonderful thought that these powers are developing in you, which will enable you, when married, to produce children like yourself, and so hand on the gift of life? These powers are the highest that are entrusted to you, and should be looked upon as something very sacred—far too sacred to be spoken about or lightly thought of.

This is the difference between a boy and a man; a boy becomes a man when he is entrusted with this power; and he should therefore guard it carefully, knowing the importance of the gift and the responsibility attached to it.

As these organs develop from the time of puberty, a greater quantity of

seminal fluid is formed each year, most of which is taken up again by the system, and gives tone and energy to it. But when more is formed than can be used, it is thrown off in sleep, often after a dream ; so that this is known as a "wet dream," or an "emission."

This may take place a year or so after the beginning of puberty, and may not occur again for a month or two. As you grow older it may become more frequent. It is quite natural, and no ill effects should be felt after it. If you feel unusually slack in the morning and for the rest of the day, it shows that the emissions are too frequent. What is too frequent for one will be quite natural for another ; so that it is impossible to

give a definite period. For many healthy men once every ten days or a fortnight would not be too frequent. It depends chiefly on the occupation and food. That great surgeon and authority on this subject, Mr. Acton, writes as follows:—"It would be better for the adult to be free even from these; and I feel convinced that in one who does not allow himself to dwell on sexual matters, but takes strong bodily exercise, they will either not occur, or their occurrence may be looked for only occasionally."

You must not be alarmed if such emissions do occur frequently, or think that you are losing your strength. If you feel fit, take plenty of exercise and do not think about these things, you

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may be quite sure that such occurrences do you no harm. I will, however, return to this point again.

Although you may not now be able fully to understand the meaning of the following quotation from Professor Stanley Hall, yet, as it ably explains an important truth, I insert it:—"Spermatozoa and ova, the elements of which pre-exist in the infant body, but which come to maturity at puberty, are elements of a very different and far higher biological order than any other tissue or organ. To their interests, could we only know them, all others whatsoever should yield." In other words, this is the most important of all matters of health on which to think and act rightly.

CHAPTER III.

IT is of the utmost importance that you should learn to control yourself during the years after puberty in which your desires are growing stronger, and not give way to a temptation to gratify them. *Except for the purpose of washing them, you must not handle your privates at all.* Many excuses are made by boys for this filthy practice of self-abuse. They will tell you that everyone does it, judging other boys by themselves. They may say that these organs need exercising, otherwise they will not develop. There is no truth in this idea;

and it is responsible for much of the harm done. Those doctors who have made this subject their special study will tell you that the surest way to injure these organs is to use them before they are developed. Their action depends on the state of the nervous system. They are connected by a network of nerves to the spinal chord. Tampering with them before they are developed not only injures their proper development, but it gives a nervous shock to the whole system at an age when it is least able to withstand it.

At the time of puberty, both the body and the brain are growing very fast; but the brain is more liable to be injured because it is more delicate, and the

effect produced on it, by any impurity of thought or action, is too often put down to other causes. A boy's character is not formed, and his will is weak; so that he is easily led into bad habits, which do him a great deal of harm. The habit mentioned above is the one which a boy most easily falls into; and it is the one which does him by far the most harm. This practice is called by several names; but the one which expresses it best is perhaps self-abuse; for it is abuse of the highest power that is given to man.

Now the effect of impurity of thought or deed acts first on the character. You have done something which you know to be wrong. You would not like those

whom you respect and love to know what you had been doing or thinking about. You would be ashamed to tell them, and this shame will make you feel guilty in their presence. If ever you have done anything of this sort you must never do it again. You must avoid boys who talk "smut," and who have a bad influence over you.

Once your self-respect has been broken down, the next time temptation comes you will not resist it so much. You will grow careless and think it does not matter. It is just this carelessness which ruins so many boys. They follow their inclinations without thinking whether they are wrong and whether they are injuring themselves by indul-

gence in them; and as *at first* they do not feel much the worse for it, they easily persuade themselves that they are doing no harm.

Do not listen to any arguments like these, or you will bitterly repent it afterwards. Every impure thought which passes through your mind and is not immediately thrust out, produces an effect on your character. You will not be ashamed of listening or even joining in the smutty talk of other boys. You will gradually sink to their level. While your mind is thus being defiled your physical health is being broken down. The habit of impurity will grow upon you until you are unable to stop yourself, and perhaps will not feel any desire

to do so. When this stage is reached a boy will soon become a complete wreck, and will feel the effects for the rest of his life.

The nervous system is easily shattered, especially when the body is weakened by rapid growth. The controlling power of the will is lost, and sights and sounds which would be passed by unnoticed by the healthy boy, become the avenues of suggestions which find a ready entrance to the mind.

Now in no other portion of the human body is so large a number of nerves brought so closely together as in the reproductive organs; so that you will easily understand how any shock to them is communicated to the nerves

throughout the entire body, including the brain. Shocks can be given to these nerves not only by rubbing or irritating these organs, but also by impure thoughts, the harm done by these being nearly as great as in any other way. The higher centres of the brain are thrown into a state of most intense excitement, which is followed by exhaustion and slackness of the whole body. It is obvious that however strong the constitution may be, it cannot stand this sort of thing for long without showing some signs of impaired strength, though the real cause is not recognized by many boys. The boy at the head of his form may lose his place, as the mind has not the same power as before to grip and

hold fast. He cannot stand up for himself and take his part in work or play as before. His grit and keenness may desert him. If he is not fond of sports he may become morose and shy, and may lose his pleasure in the good fellowship which characterises a boy with a vigorous mind and strong body. Finally, the nervous system may become so shattered and ruined that complete recovery is impossible.

While these moral and mental changes are taking place, the physical effects do not stop with the nerves; for through them the heart may become weak, like the voice, causing bad circulation and clammy hands. The complexion may lose its healthy colour, the muscles may

become flabby, and the eyes, in some cases, will become affected.

The effects of this vice have been well summed up by Dr. Clement Dukes, Physician to Rugby School, as follows:—
“The harm which results is moral, intellectual and physical. *Physically* it is a frequent drain at a critical time of life, when nature is providing for growth and development and is ill able to bear it; it is a powerful nervous shock to the system ill prepared to meet it. It is *early abuse*, and *not* abstinence, that tends to produce atrophy of the generative organs; whereas this is used as a terror to urge on the innocent. It is early abuse, too, which renders the organs incapable of retention of secretion. It also causes

muscular and mental debility, loss of spirit and manliness, and occasionally insanity, suicide, and homicide."

"Moreover, it leads to further uncontrollable passions in early manhood. It is a frequent observation instilled into the young at all ages: 'I am told it is very bad for me to be continent, my health will suffer from it.' No greater lie was ever invented. It is simply a base invention to cover sin, and has no foundation in fact."

"Further, this vice enfeebles the intellectual powers, inducing lethargy and obtuseness, and incapacity for hard mental work. And last, and most of all, it is an *immorality* which stains the whole character and undermines it for life."

CHAPTER IV.

NO doubt some boys, even after they have been told the effects of this vice, will persuade themselves that a little indulgence in it cannot do them much harm. They think that it will not be any worse than an occasional overeating, and that if they feel any bad effects they will give it up. Yes! many boys have thought they could give it up when they pleased, but have gradually put off the time for doing so, until, when they really tried to give it up, their efforts have proved unavailing. Do not be misled by any arguments of

this kind ; once you start the practice of impurity, you cannot tell where it may bring you to.

The example of some school athletes leads many of the younger boys astray. They think that because so-and-so, a good runner or football player, is known to lead an impure life and does not appear to be harmed by it, therefore it will not hurt them. This is simply because it is these boys who have the greatest physical strength and energy, and that consequently it takes some time before the effect is noticeable to others, though it is known to themselves. But ask them a few years after they have left school whether they would not give almost anything to be

able to relive those years, and you will get a unanimous answer that they bitterly regret not being able to do so. While it may not prevent them from winning a race or prize in their own school, yet, when they leave, and go up to the University or elsewhere and compete against others of equal natural ability, who have led clean lives, the effect is noticeable at once.

Suppose you had a pair of scales and put a pound weight into the left-hand scale and held a handful of sugar over the other, *every grain that you let fall would tell*; but the scale would not move until you had put in more than sufficient to balance the weight, when it would swing right over. It is just so

with this habit. A boy gradually weighs down his vitality, and although the scale may never swing over at school, it may later on. What folly it is then to handicap yourself in this way, when all your energy is needed to enable you to do your best ; for you must be content with nothing short of this.

You must be on your guard, so that you may not fall in a weak moment. The temptation may come in many different ways. You will meet with boys who have not had instruction in this matter, and who have wrong ideas and have fallen into bad habits. You can tell them at once by the way they talk. If you meet with any such, you should avoid them as much as possible ; for

they will tell you things which you will be ashamed to repeat. Tales and jests of this sort will burn themselves into the brain, and many years may pass before they are forgotten.

Be careful with whom you make friends. It is best to keep to those of your own age or position in the school. You may find some older boys who will want to take you up, but in most cases it is best not to have anything to do with them. Such friendships are often sentimental, and may bring you into great danger. Have nothing to do with any such nonsense. It is unmanly and weakens your self-respect. Treat with contempt all such advances, whether from an older boy or one of your own

age. Your best friends are not those who make the greatest show of affection.

You need never be afraid of being laughed at ; most boys are so ashamed of themselves that they keep their actions secret : their conversation on these topics is only with those of the same way of thinking as themselves, and if some are hardened enough to wish to drag in others, hitherto innocent, a resolute front will soon make them sheer off. A resort to fists may be necessary in some cases ; and if defeat is inevitable, it should be taken as in a good cause ; a little instruction from a brother or friend in the holidays in the art of self-defence will probably be sufficient to withstand any attempts at compulsion. Even if

you are beaten, the mere fact that you have shown yourself ready to fight for your principles, will exact respect for them and you, even from your opponents. But if this is not enough, and you can't get a friend to help you, you must tell somebody about it. There is no need to mention any names, but you must on no account allow yourself to be forced into actions that you know to be wrong.

Now, without giving you anything in the nature of a "pi-jaw," I want to tell you one thing you can do to help in this question of impurity. You may find that in the school you go to there is no public opinion against impurity ; that those boys who practise it are not

shunned, but are sometimes the most popular in the school. You must admit that this ought not to be so. If a boy did some mean and ungentlemanly act he would be "barred" at once; yet, when he does far worse things, no stain attaches to him; he may have friends among those who are quite straight, but who pass over his faults because they are so used to them. Now I want you to do what you can to alter this state of things. Do not hesitate to say what you think about this degrading vice. It is justly described by that famous surgeon, Sir James Paget, as "an uncleanness, a filthiness forbidden by God, an unmanliness despised by man." Perhaps you can get some of your

friends to join with you in putting down all open indecency and foul talk. If you can do this you will have done something which you will one day consider as of far more worth than all the prizes and honours you were successful enough to obtain at school. Anyhow, do what you can to help in the matter.

CHAPTER V.

IT is now time to give a word of encouragement to any who have fallen into the vice spoken of above, but who, while knowing the havoc it is making with their constitution, feel themselves unable to break it off entirely. To all these I would say :—" Let the past be closed, that cannot be re-lived ; you have learnt by experience what a few, and it is to be hoped an increasing number, have had the better fortune to be taught. You must, therefore, with the knowledge you now possess, strain every nerve to regain that position which

you have lost by your own folly or carelessness. There must be no half-hearted measures, no dallying with temptation, no thought of putting off your fresh start, and no looking back ; there never will be a fresh start under such conditions."

It depends largely on your own efforts how soon you will begin to feel strong again, and how far your recovery will be carried. Surely you will put forth your full effort when you remember that not only is it for your own sake, but for that of others—your father and mother, who have perhaps seen with sorrow the energy and promise you showed give place to listlessness, and been unable to divine the cause. It is they who feel these things most ; they have to provide

for you and keep you until you are able to keep yourself ; and how can you possibly do this if you throw away your health in the pursuit of selfish gratification ? Such a course is pre-eminently selfish ; for it reacts not only on your parents and relatives, but on your friends and all those around. It therefore behoves every boy to do his duty, first to himself and those around, that he may not degrade his nature and bring suffering on himself and sorrow on his friends ; and secondly to his country, that he may grow up a worthy citizen of a great nation, and help to uphold the national greatness by the strength and purity of his life, and by bequeathing these in undiminished vigour to his descendants.

The first thing needful is thoroughly to grasp the nature and extent of the injury you are doing yourself whenever this vice is given way to. Temptation will rarely come if you keep your thoughts pure; but if it does come, immediately set your mind on something else: if lying awake in bed in the morning, jump out at once and commence dressing; and when the temptation is passed you will feel stronger than ever, and more confident in your powers of resistance. Never get over confident and think you can go part of the way and then stop; never relax your vigilance; evil thoughts enter in so many different ways that only constant watchfulness will prove effectual. It is only

by encouraging pure thoughts that you can keep out impure ones. If you have been in the habit of talking "smut," you must stop it at once, and refuse to let your mind dwell on these things. Not only are you harming yourself by talking "smut," but others too ; whereas, if you refuse to join in or laugh at such talk, you will strengthen your own character and help others also. Strengthen your resolutions with every aid you know of, and if possible tell your troubles to some one you can trust and get him to help you. See where you have failed in the past and determine to succeed in the future.

All literature and illustrations of a harmful nature, whether in newspapers,

magazines, or books, must resolutely be avoided. You cannot help seeing and hearing some things, as advertisements are placarded all over the world, and some boys will say and do things in your presence although they know your principles; but many will be restrained from doing so, and the fact that they know you are "straight," although perhaps younger than themselves, will keep them from offending you by word or deed. If a filthy book or picture is shown to you by another boy, tear it up.

Once you have made your new resolutions, act on them, and seize every opportunity of doing so. You will soon find that your character will become so strong that a relapse into your former

ways will seem impossible. You will be surprised to find how soon a desire, which seemed almost irresistible before, can easily be controlled if it be *never* fed.

You may find that when you stop your bad habits, wet dreams will become more frequent at first, and even exhausting. Do not be alarmed at this, for it is a natural consequence of weakening your organs ; they have become relaxed by your indulgence, but will gradually get all right again in time. If you think you need medical advice, consult your school or family doctor, or your father ; *but on no account answer the advertisements of quacks who advertise in some papers, or those who send round circulars.*

The important thing to remember is that frequent emissions are usually brought on by impure thoughts, especially at night time, and that you can injure yourself nearly as much by these thoughts as in any other way. Quite apart from the effect impurity of thought and conversation has on the character, it stimulates the secretion of this fluid, as the mouth is made to water by thinking of some delicacy to eat. The body is therefore called upon to supply more than it can use, emissions will occur at too frequent a rate, and the strength is drained because the imagination is allowed to wander and dwell upon thoughts of impurity.

CHAPTER VI.

THE importance of the question of impurity entirely overshadows everything else in boyhood, and indeed throughout life; but some other things must not be lost sight of.

To begin with physical health. There are certain rules which you will find most people observe, and which you yourself have probably been observing, merely perhaps from force of habit without knowing the benefit of them. We may place first the regular fulfilment of all the functions of the body.

The body, in order to maintain its

heat and furnish sufficient nourishment to the brain, must take in food at intervals. Now in order to show you clearly the way in which this work is done, let us consider an ordinary coal fire. The fire, that it may be kept burning brightly, must have coal put on at intervals, before it has burnt too low. If too much coal is put on at a time the fire will take some time to burn up, and will give off a great deal of smoke; the smoke being unburnt fuel which, unless collected, is wasted in the air. Further, as the coal is consumed, ashes fall into the grate or accumulate at the bottom of the fire, which has to be raked out regularly, so that it may burn brightly and not become choked up.

Now the coal corresponds to the food we eat ; and if we are good stokers we shall eat just so much as will make us feel refreshed after a meal, never heavy and sleepy. If we eat too much we give our stomach and other organs too much work to do, consequently the work is not done properly, and the blood which should circulate in the brain is taken away in order to help that in the digestive organs. We then feel disinclined for exercise of any kind, and if exercise is taken a state arises known in polite society as "indigestion." The extra food taken in has to be got rid of somehow ; and this can only be accomplished by the expenditure of much energy, which could have better

been employed in doing something useful.

The ashes in the grate correspond to the waste products which we are incapable of digesting or making use of ; and the part which contains them, *i.e.*, the bowels, should therefore be emptied every day. The most convenient and best time of the day is immediately after breakfast ; and a habit of doing so at this time should be formed. Besides these, there are other waste products which are accumulated in the bladder and passed out as urine ; a certain amount being got rid of through the skin. The bladder should be emptied the last thing at night and at intervals during the day. It is important that

these things should be attended to with unfailing regularity ; as it is only by so doing that the other parts of the body can perform their work properly. To those who are trying to get over their old habits these things are especially important ; because the retention of faecal matter in the intestines, or water in the bladder, distends those organs, and by pressure, induces excitement in the organs of generation, and so increases the difficulty of self-control. Those who suffer from frequent seminal emissions should drink little in the evening, and should empty their bladder if they awake during the night.

This brings me to the important subject of sleep. At night a boy is in a

more highly strung state than during the day ; his imagination is more vivid and his common sense and will power are weakened. Consequently the events of the day rise with great force and, unless resolutely put away, will banish sleep, at any rate for a while. To those who are trying to keep straight this is a critical time : if you have let your thoughts and conversation wander on impurity during the day time, those thoughts and conversations will come back with redoubled force at a time when you are less able to withstand their suggestions. But if you do your work well, and take as much exercise as will make you reasonably tired, you will fall to sleep quickly ; if the thoughts

have been kept pure, no suggestions will enter the mind; or, if they enter, will at once be expelled. The important thing in going to bed is to get to sleep as soon as possible, not only for the reason mentioned above, but also because sleep in the early part of the night is more beneficial than that obtained later. Avoid sleeping on the back; but if you find yourself liable to do so, tie something hard, such as a cotton reel, round the waist, so that it will rest on the spine. This will wake you up if you turn over on your back. Sleep on a firm mattress, not on a feather bed; and never lie in bed beyond your usual time. However late you went to bed you will wake up about the same time

in the morning; get out at once and dress, as lying in bed in the morning will undo the good that the remainder of the night has done.

Although at school you will have to conform to the regulations as to baths, when at home it is advisable to have a cold one every morning; or, if you cannot take it quite cold at first, start with tepid water and finish up with cold water. Keep the organs of generation scrupulously clean, especially the part under the foreskin; if unable to have a bath every day, at all events try and sponge these parts with cold water. The foreskin is the loose skin at the top of the penis; and if it is too long or too tight, so as to cause pain, you should see

your father or doctor about it in case it requires attention or cutting. This latter is called circumcision and can be done without pain. Do not hesitate to ask advice on this and all other matters connected with the organs of generation, as it is important that anything wrong with them should at once be put right.

Before closing this chapter one other point must be mentioned. This is, that stimulating drinks should not be taken by boys at school, except under medical advice; and in this category I include beer and similar beverages. This is important for those who are trying to overcome their old habits; and special care should be taken not to drink beer

at night time, or to eat heavy suppers. If such suppers are provided at school, as little as possible of the heavy articles of food, such as meat, cheese, etc., should be taken, and little to drink, for the reason given on page 48.

CHAPTER VII.

THE advice in the foregoing pages may seem simple, but if properly carried out will make a very great difference to you, both now and in after life. At any rate, the choice rests with you whether you will pay attention to it or not. Rejoicing in your splendid health, you think that nothing can undermine it ; you know not the pain and discomfort of ill-health ; but be assured of this, that every act you do has an effect on yourself and on others, and that if you break the rules of healthy living, you cannot escape from the

consequences, whether immediate or remote.

It is extremely difficult to make you realise what ill-health means, and what effect continuance in self-abuse has on lowering that exuberance of spirits which is characteristic of boyhood. But think, for a moment, of the times when you have been most depressed, when you have felt little of that energy you usually possess ; consider what it would be like if, instead of knowing that the feeling would pass off in a day or so, you felt that you might always be like that, or only slowly recover, and then you may realise in a slight degree the danger against which I have been trying to warn you.

A locomotive on a railway has a certain life; that is, it will run so many thousand miles and will then be worn out and discarded. The length of its life depends on the material of which it was constructed, the good fitting of the parts, known as the workmanship, and the care with which it was looked after. In like manner your life depends on your constitution, which you have inherited; that is, the material of which you are constructed and the workmanship; these are not under your control, but are bequeathed to you from your ancestors. The third factor, the care with which you look after yourself, is in your own hands, and is the most important factor of all; for, by careful

living you will run better and last longer than otherwise ; further, by this care of yourself, you may even improve your heritage and bequeath a better one to your descendants.

I have laid stress on the question of impurity because it is by far the most important in boyhood and throughout life ; but do not think that because only one form of it has been mentioned, that you may not be confronted with other forms which may be a greater temptation to you, especially after you leave school. Do not think, also, that because you keep straight in the most important thing, that you can do as you please in others not so important. As one of the most famous scientists has

said: —“ We must bear in mind what almost all forget, that the rewards of life are contingent upon obedience to the whole law—physical as well as moral—and that moral obedience will not atone for physical sin, or *vice versa*. In short, as we live we are paid for living.” Yes! the coin in which we are paid depends entirely on ourselves, whether it be the sterling coin of the realm, or a debased currency, which, moreover, becomes still more debased every day.

In these few pages of advice and warning, I have not touched on the spiritual helps to purity; they are safely left in more competent hands than mine. Make up your mind at once, and so strengthen

your hold on "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report," that in times of special storm and stress, the ship of your being may be so well handled as to ride safely over the rough seas of youth, into the calm waters of perfect manhood. However well made the ship may be, however well designed, if the seamanship is not good, she will inevitably strike a rock, or run on a shoal and founder. You have here a chart of life; you have all the dangers marked thereon, the rocks, shoals, and quicksands on which you may be damaged or completely wrecked. Although you may steer clear of them yourself, others have not been so fortunate, but

have been wrecked when barely started on their voyage. If you have been in peril yourself, your sympathy will readily be extended to others in like case, and by your help many a one may perhaps be saved.

I started by comparing life with a game, the rules of which had either to be told you by others or learnt by experience. You have now been told the most important of them ; it is for you to practise them, to tell others of them, so that this country of yours may keep its place among the nations of the earth, and be renowned, as in the past, for all that stands for courage, equity, and truth ; in other words, all that is meant by the phrase—Playing the Game.

“This is the word that year by year
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.

This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind—
‘Play up! play up! and play the game!’” *

* Henry Newbolt, “Vitaī Lampada.”

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